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SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Requesting School Board to Dis-
pense With the Services of
Supt. Geo. W. Chapman.

At a special meeting of the City Council, on last Tuesday night, that body adopted a resolution requesting the School Board to immediately dis-
pense with the services of Prof. Chap-
man, the Superintendent of the City
School. This institution is one in
which every citizen is vitally interest-
ed, and for that reason, and for the ad-
ditional reason that so many conflict-
ing reports are in circulation, we think
that the proceedings of the meeting
should be fully published so that the
people may understand the true situa-
tion.

The Mayor stated that he had called
the meeting for the purpose of con-
sidering certain matters affecting the
public school, and as it was important,
he had thought it best to reduce his
statements to writing, so that neither
his meaning or his words would be mis-
understood. His statement, which
consisted of twelve pages of type-
written matter, commenced as follows:

"Gentlemen:—On Thursday, the 18th
inst., I went to Madisonville for the
purpose of investigating the antecede-
ents and record of George W. Chap-
man, Superintendent of the Public
Schools, returning home on Saturday
night. On the following Monday morn-
ing, the 22nd inst., I asked R. P. Dow,
the President of the School Board to
call a meeting of that body, as I wish-
ed to lay before it the results of my
investigation. He did so and on that
night, accompanied by Mr. Parrish and
Mr. Woods, members of this council,
I went before the School Board and
made substantially the following state-
ment:

"Gentlemen:—I am here tonight for
the purpose of laying before you cer-
tain facts affecting the moral character
and reputation of Geo. W. Chapman,
Superintendent of the Public Schools.
I wish to premise my remarks, how-
ever, with the statement that since my
return home, I have been informed that
Mr. Chapman or some of his friends
have been saying that I am opposed to
him because he was for local option.
If such statements have been made,
the President of this School Board can
bear witness to the fact that they are
absolutely and unqualifiedly false, for
he knows that I came to him and pro-
tested against the re-election of Mr.
Chapman before a local option election
was ever ordered; moreover, I do not
know, of my own knowledge, whether
he was for or against it."

He further stated to the School Board
that he had known for quite awhile
that there was great dissatisfaction
among the teachers as none of them
seemed to like either the Superintend-
ent or his methods, and that one of
the teachers, who had been in the
school for nineteen years, refused to
apply for her position again on that
account. He went to Mr. Dow and to
Mr. Templin, explained the situation
and requested that an investigation be
made of conditions in the school before
electing a superintendent for the com-
ing year. This the Board declined to
do, and on that same night, re-elected
Mr. Chapman. The next morning, he
went to Mr. Dow and informed him
that he—the Mayor—had just been told
that some time last summer, the School
Board had received a signed letter
from a former resident of Louisville,
where Mr. Chapman had formerly
taught school, charging that the latter
had been guilty of immoral conduct
while at that place. That instead of
investigating that charge, three mem-
bers of the Board had, through Mr.
Arnsperger, made an investigation of
Chapman's record at Madisonville,
from which place Mr. Chapman came
to Paris, and that while he—the Mayor
—did not know the results of Mr. Arn-
sperger's investigation, he did know
that the three members of the Board
had agreed to keep the matter a secret,
even from the other members. That
he, also, had received a newspaper clip-
ping showing that charges of some sort
had been preferred against Mr. Chap-
man at the last named place, and as
there seemed to be so much dissatisfac-
tion in the school, that in justice both
to the city and the teachers he would
make an investigation. He went to
Madisonville and called on some of the
most prominent men there. The first
one he called upon was the editor of
one of the leading newspapers there,
formerly County Judge, and now a can-
didate for the Democratic nomination
for Representative from Hopkins
County. This gentleman informed him
that while Mr. Chapman was at the
head of the school at that place, all
sorts of rumors were in circulation re-
garding his undue familiarity with the
female pupils. That finally three of
the girls made written statements in
regard to the matter, and public senti-
ment became so strong that he—his in-
formant—went to the members of the
School Board, who were trying to sus-
tain Mr. Chapman, and told them that
they could not afford to defy the senti-
ment, and that they must let him go.
This gentleman also told him that his
own daughters had complained to their
mother about Mr. Chapman's treatment
of them.

He then called upon the County At-
torney of Hopkins County, who is the
Hon. Ruby Laffoon, the present Demo-
cratic nominee for State Treasurer,
and one of the most prominent men in
that section of the State. He was in-
formed by this official that three girls
had made written charges against Mr.
Chapman, alleging that that person
had taken them into his private office,
hugged them and put his hands under
their clothes. That he had taken these
statements to the School Board, and
said to them that if they did not get
rid of Chapman he would demand a

warrant for his arrest, and that when
the charges were shown to Mr. Chap-
man, he immediately resigned. That
after Mr. Chapman left the school,
some of the larger girls made known
the fact that he had hugged them at
various times, but they had said nothing
about it as they wanted to pass at the
end of the term and knew they
would not do so if they complained of
the Superintendent. He also mention-
ed other discreditable rumors that
were in circulation.

After stating all of these things to
the School Board he—the Mayor—had
asked them to drop Mr. Chapman from
the school, saying that this city could
not afford to have a man with that sort
of a reputation at the head of the
school; that the public demanded—and
rightfully so—that the character of
teachers, both male and female, should
be above suspicion and that justice to
the patrons of the school demanded
that only that sort should be employed.

Mr. Dow admitted that all that the
Mayor had said about the letter from
Louisiana and the investigation made by
the three members of the Board was
true. Mr. Arnsperger in defense of
Mr. Chapman and of the action of the
School Board in retaining him after
knowledge that these charges had been
made against him, said that he had
been assured by the members of the
School Board and by several other per-
sons at Madisonville, that Mr. Chap-
man was a good man, and that the
charges against him were groundless,
and that being satisfied that such was
the case, he had come home and so re-
ported to the three members of the
Board, and that they had agreed to
keep the matter a secret.

Mr. Arnsperger stated that he was
satisfied from what he had learned that
County Attorney Ruby Laffoon and
Judge Yost, two of the most prominent
men there, were responsible for the
troubles that Mr. Chapman had in
Madisonville. He said that these two
lawyers were behind the severe whip-
ping of a boy and intended to sue him
for damages if they could have him
convicted on the criminal charge, but
that when the grand jury failed to in-
dict, they got mad, had these reports
started and charges filed, and did all in
their power to annoy him.

The Mayor said that that was a curi-
ous charge to bring against members
of its own profession, in good standing,
and Mr. Arnsperger replied that his
statements were true.

The School Board took the ground
that as the guilt of Mr. Chapman had
not been conclusively shown to them,
it was their duty to retain him, no
matter what rumors were in circula-
tion, or what his reputation was in
other places. For that reason, the
Mayor had appealed to the Council for
it to take such action as it might deem
proper.

The statement of the Mayor conclud-
ed as follows:

"It is not denied—in fact, it is ad-
mitted—by Mr. Chapman, Mr. Arnsper-
ger and Mr. Dow, that the signed let-
ter accusing Mr. Chapman of immoral
conduct in Louisiana was received here,
and that the rumors and charges in re-
gard to his conduct in Madisonville
were made and in circulation there;
and further, that when these written
charges were made, he resigned his
position some months before the school
term closed. Mr. Arnsperger says he
saw the written statements referred to
by Mr. Laffoon. He says, however,
that he was told by Judge Yost that
they were not sworn to and seeks to
discredit them upon that ground. I
take it that this is of no importance,
even if true, for all that was necessary
was to prove the truth of the charges
when the matter was heard. Never
the less, he says they were in existence
and were shown to him. This being
the case it is, as I said to the School
Board, of no practical importance to
the people of Paris whether Mr. Chap-
man is guilty or innocent of the
charges. They are no obligation to de-
fend him, or to furnish him a position
in which to rehabilitate his shattered
reputation. Their first duty is to them-
selves. It is of the utmost importance
that the reputation of those entrusted
with the formation of the character
and the education of the children
should be above reproach. In matters
affecting the Public Schools, parents
can afford to take no chances; they
cannot be expected to critically weigh
in the balance and determine the truth
or falsity of such charges. 'An ounce
of preventive is worth a pound of
cure,' and it is, in my judgment, much
better to take decisive action at once,
rather than postpone it, possibly to our
infinite and unending regret.

"For these reasons, Mr. Chapman's
connection with the school should, in
my opinion, end immediately, and I ask
you a body charged with the welfare
and good government of this commu-
nity, to take such steps as may be nec-
essary to secure this result. It is with
extreme regret that I make these mat-
ters public, but the refusal of the
School Board to take action, leaves me
no other course to pursue."

The Mayor stated that the state-
ment he had just read had been pre-
pared to submit to the Council at its regu-
lar meeting last Thursday night, but
there being so much business to attend
to at that meeting he had postponed it
until this time. He then read a short
additional statement prepared that
day.

He said that immediately after his
meeting with the School Board, he had
written Mr. Laffoon a letter telling
him of the statements made by Mr.
Arnsperger concerning himself and
Judge Yost. He read a letter from
each one of these gentlemen. Judge
Yost denounced the statements made
concerning him as malicious and de-
liberate falsehoods and denied telling
Mr. Arnsperger that the statements
were not sworn to. All that he did tell
him was that on account of the charges
made by girls against Mr. Chapman,
he considered the latter a dangerous
man to be entrusted with the care of

children and on that account he did not
care to discuss the matter.

Mr. Laffoon also denied the state-
ments made by Mr. Arnsperger and de-
tailed his connection with and knowl-
edge of Mr. Chapman.

The Mayor also said that when he
had written to the President of the
Madisonville School Board in regard
to this matter, that official had conced-
ed the whole in reply.

The whole situation can be thorough-
ly understood from reading the last
paragraph of Mayor O'Brien's last
statement and the charges contained
in the letter of Mr. Laffoon, County
Attorney of Hopkins County, of which
Madisonville is the county seat. The
Mayor's statement concluded as fol-
lows:

"Since my appearance before the
School Board, the statement has been
assiduously circulated by some of its
members, that the matters to which I
called their attention, had been care-
fully investigated in Madisonville and
found to be without foundation. Against
that statement, I set the written
and signed statement of the County
Attorney of Hopkins County, that no
investigation of these written charges
was ever made, but that on the con-
trary as soon as they were made, Mr.
Chapman immediately resigned and the
natural inference is, that he took
such action to escape an investigation."

"The fact remains that Mr. Chap-
man left his former place under a
cloud; that after written statements
charging him with immoral conduct
had been made, he resigned, without
an investigation, and so far as the
records show, without making any
effort to show his innocence. Under
such circumstances, it is evident that
his reputation is such, that his contin-
ued connection with the school can only
result in damage to that institution. I
again repeat my request that you take
such action as will result in his re-
moval, and suggest that you adopt a
resolution requesting the Board of Edu-
cation to dispense with his services."

That portion of the County At-
torney's letter referring to the written
charges filed against Mr. Chapman is
as follows:

"There were many damaging reports
about Chapman's attempted intimacy
with girl pupils. It was the town
talk. Good citizens appealed to me as
County Attorney to investigate the
matter. I did investigate. As the re-
sult of my investigations I procured
the signed statements of three girls,
all that I attempted to get, stating
that Chapman had called them into his
office at different times, and while
alone with him he had put his hands
under their dresses and (our readers
are referred to the letter itself for the
details of the charges)."

"Two of these statements were writ-
ten by me in the exact language of the
girl making them. The other one was
written by the girl herself, not in my
presence nor in the presence of any
one else. After I had secured these
statements, I went before the School
Board and informed them of their
nature, not telling them that I had
them written in my possession. The
School Board informed me that they
could not act unless the charges were
reduced to writing and formally pre-
sented. I then produced the state-
ments and read them to the Board and
informed them that unless they pro-
ceeded to act upon these statements,
which I had read, I would demand a
warrant of arrest and proceed with a
prosecution in the Courts. I told them
that if they would dismiss Chapman
from the School I would not insist upon
a prosecution, as the parents of the
girls did not want the matter brought
publicly before the community or have
their daughters brought into court to
testify upon such a charge, if it could
be prevented. The Board immediately
sent for Chapman and informed him of
the statements in my possession and
what I had said, thereupon he imme-
diately resigned his position and noth-
ing further was demanded or done."

After the Mayor had concluded,
the Council adopted a resolution, asking
the School Board to immediately dis-
miss Mr. Chapman. All of the written
statements and letters have been made
a part of the City records and spread
upon the minutes. They are now pub-
lic documents and are open to the in-
spection of the public. They are well
worth reading and should be carefully
examined by every citizen of this city
who has the interests of the school at
heart.

Statement of C. Arnsperger, Le- gal Advisor of School Board.

That the Board of Education of the
City of Paris is a separate and inde-
pendent department of the municipal
government, and that the City Council
of Paris has nothing whatever to do
with the selection of Superintendent
and teachers of the City Schools, and
their action Tuesday night was cer-
tainly absurd, when same is taken in
connection with what had previously
occurred. Prof. Geo. W. Chapman,
who was formerly Superintendent of
Madisonville, Ky., Public Schools, was
in the Spring of 1906 elected by the
Board of Education of Paris, Superin-
tendent of its schools. He was unani-
mously endorsed by his school board at
Madisonville, his corps of teachers
there and by prominent persons and
Board of Education where he had pre-
viously been employed. In August,
just before the school term, some per-
son wrote three letters, one to Chair-
man of the School Board, one to
County Superintendent of Schools and
another to Mayor O'Brien, of Paris.
These letters made the same serious
charges against Prof. Chapman and no
action was taken by Mayor O'Brien at
that time, though he had a sister teach-
ing in the public schools. He later
admitted before the School Board that
he threw the letter in the fire because,

Concluded on page 4, column 2.

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